United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1097
11 March 1992

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ In opening today's meeting of the Security Council, its President concludes, on behalf of Council members, that "Iraq has not fully complied with the obligations placed upon it by the Council"; all members of the Council, as well as Kuwait and heads of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament and International Atomic Energy Agency point out failure by Iraq to fully comply with its obligations; Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister suggests convening of a technical meeting, "as soon as possible", on the question of obligations; meeting to continue tomorrow.

+ Vladimir Petrovsky and James O.C. Jonah assume posts as under-secretaries-general for Political Affairs.

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The Security Council convened this morning in a formal meeting to discuss Iraq's obligations under Council resolution 687 (1991) and all subsequent decisions and to hear a Presidential statement on the issue.

During the meeting, which carried over into the evening after a two-hour recess, the Council heard statements by all 15 Council members, as well as by Iraq, Kuwait, the Executive Chairman of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament, Rolf Ekeus, and Hans Blix, Director-General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In his opening statement, Council President Diego Arria (Venezuela) said the Council had concluded that "Iraq has not fully complied with the obligations placed upon it by the Council". On behalf of the Council, he expressed the hope that today's meeting would provide an opportunity to "advance in the consideration of this issue as required in the interest of world peace and security, as well as that of the Iraqi people".

In his statement, the President cited the declaration adopted by the Security Council Summit on 31 January, in which 15 Heads of State and Government had stated that the Council resolutions remained "essential to the restoration of peace and stability in the region and must be fully implemented".

(more)

With regard to Council resolution 688 (1991) demanding that Iraq end the repression of its civilian population, the President said the Council remained "deeply concerned" at the "grave human rights abuses" which the Iraqi Government continued to perpetrate against its population, in particular in the northern region of Iraq, and in southern Shi'a centres. He said the Council was particularly concerned at the reported restrictions on the supplies of essential commodities, in particular food and fuel.

The Presidential statement also described the specific obligations imposed upon Iraq by several Council resolutions. Those obligations concern, among other things: the return of Kuwaiti property from Iraq to Kuwait; the demarcation of the international boundary between Iraq and Kuwait; the humanitarian situation of the Iraqi civilian population, including in the Kurdish-populated areas; the full cooperation of the Iraqi authorities with the United Nations specialized agencies in the area of monitoring and verification of its weapons programmes; and repatriation of Kuwaitis and third-country nationals in Iraq.

In their respective statements, the 15 members of the Security Council, as well as Kuwait and the heads of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament and the International Atomic Energy Agency (AIEA) pointed out that Iraq had failed to fully comply with its obligations contained in the Security Council resolutions and stressed that these obligations had to be carried out entirely and unconditionally.

In his statement to the Council, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz proposed a technical meeting, as soon as possible, between Iraqi representatives, representatives of the Special Commission, and attended by representatives of all member States of the Security Council. During this meeting, Mr. Aziz said, delegates would review all data, information and documentation, previously presented by Iraq, and prepare a comprehensive report to be presented to the Council. Such a meeting, he said, would bring "this issue out of the cycle of allegations, frictions, misunderstandings and ill-intended political positions, and place it in its rightful political framework".

The Security Council meeting is scheduled to continue tomorrow, when it will hear additional explanations from Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz.

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Vladimir Petrovsky and James O.C. Jonah, who were appointed under-secretaries-general for Political Affairs by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, have assumed their posts effective 1 March.

Mr. Petrovsky, who joined the Soviet diplomatic service in 1957, became Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union in 1986 and First Deputy Foreign Minister in 1991. He has also been the head of the Soviet delegation to the United Nations General Assembly.

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Mr. Jonah had served as Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship since 1 January 1991 and, most recently, as the Secretary-General's special envoy to Somalia.

A national of Sierra Leone, Mr. Jonah joined the Secretariat in 1963 and has held a number of post in the Organization, among others Assistant Secretary-General, Office for Research and the Collection of Information (1987-1990); Assistant Secretary-General in the Office of Field Operational and External Support Activities (1982-1987); and Assistant Secretary-General for Personnel Services (1979-1981).

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